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ABSTRACT

Intended to help elementary school children integrate the skills of writing and reading at an early age, this booklet discusses research concerning the cognitive processes and acquisition of reading and writing skills, and presents teaching methods and resources to help young children make the connection. The first half of the booklet explores research concerning the interrelationship of reading and writing and children's perception of this connection before being taught these two activities in school, often in isolation from each other. It also discusses the use of children's literature as models for children's writing. The second half of the booklet presents 26 teaching methods and appropriate resources, based on each letter of the alphabet, for helping students make the transition from reading to writing. Examples include (1) alphabet books, (2) character development, (3) dreams, (4) holidays, (5) imaginary friends, (6) newspapers, (7) script writing and storytelling, (8) team writing, and (9) verse. (HTH)

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THEORY &
RESEARCH
INTO
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Writing Is Reading

26 Ways to Connect

Eileen Tway

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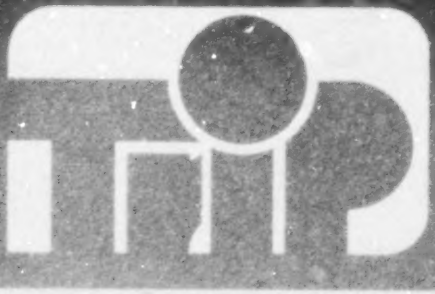

Writing Is Reading

26 Ways to Connect

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Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). ERIC provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development reports, and related information useful in developing effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current information and lists that information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—a considerable body of data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of educational research are to be used by teachers, much of the data must be translated into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports easily accessible, NIE has directed the ERIC clearinghouses to commission authorities in various fields to write information analysis papers.

As with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as a primary goal bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of booklets designed to meet concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with a review of the best educational theory and research on a limited topic, followed by descriptions of classroom activities that will assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

The idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks offer similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are, however, noteworthy in their sharp focus on educational needs and their pairing of sound academic theory with tested classroom practice. And they have been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Board. Suggestions for topics are welcomed by the Board and should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Charles Suhor
Director, ERIC/RCS

1 Theory and Research

Writing Is Reading

To say that writing is reading appears to be patently obvious. After all, writing is intended to be read, if only by the writer. Yet for years the focus of national attention has been on reading alone, ignoring the writing side of it all. Now writing seems to be coming into its own, perhaps flying in the face of technological developments that appear to be working against its resurrection as a national concern. New technology makes it possible for communication to remain at an oral level for many people who find it convenient to use telephones with memories, computers that respond to voice commands, and so on. Still, in the face of all this, recent educational reports, such as the Carnegie Report (Boyer 1983), are calling for renewed emphasis on writing.

Fortunately, at the same time that writing is making news, many articles and books are appearing that show writing and reading connections (see Goodman 1983; Squire 1983; etc.). In fact, "connections" seems to be one of the new watchwords in education. It is a useful term, and necessary in the light of what has happened over the years with reading, when researchers and teachers tried to focus on reading apart from the other language arts. As glad as teachers of writing may be to see writing getting new respect, they will want to guard against viewing writing in isolation. Kenneth and Yetta Goodman write, ". . . people not only learn to read by reading and write by writing but they also learn to read by writing and write by reading" (Goodman and Goodman 1983, 592).

Lucy McCormick Calkins, who worked with Donald Graves and other researchers in the New Hampshire study, "How Children Change as Writers," purposely ignored reading in her early research on writing. She explained, "For years, I'd watched teachers spend two hours a day on the teaching of reading, and barely any time on the teaching of writing. In retrospect, I think it was because I was angry at reading that I acted as if writing and reading were separate, even competing processes. . . . Of course, I was wrong" (Calkins 1983, 152–53).

Calkins found that there was *no way* she could watch writing without watching reading. She saw that, while composing, children read continually. They read to savor what they had written; they read to regain momentum; they read to edit; they read for many, many reasons. Finally, they read aloud to share what they had written, and they read the works of others. In short, Calkins found that she could not ignore reading. It was *there*. It was there in the writing classroom when children read and reread as they wrote. It was there when the teacher and classmates read what each other wrote. It was there when children read good literature and learned more about what happens in good writing.

Conversely, when the children in the New Hampshire study wrote and read, they also learned more about good reading. Donald Graves (1978) says that children who write for others achieve more easily the objectivity necessary for reading the work of others. It is not surprising, then, that Calkins found the children using skills in their writing that were also useful reading skills: selecting main ideas; organizing supporting details; discovering cause and effect; developing conclusions, and so on.

Some researchers are describing the reading-writing connection as reciprocal (Elkind 1976; Boutwell 1983). Marilyn A. Boutwell, a teacher-researcher, describes a child's behavior while writing as zigzagging back and forth from writing to reading, rewriting to rereading. The child as writer would pause, switch to the child as reader, and consider the text. "Inevitably this would lead to a spurt as a writer again," Boutwell concludes (p. 724). Boutwell speaks of reading as a writing strategy and of writing as a reading strategy. She gives an example of the latter by discussing a child's strategies in dealing with confusing parts of her reading: "When Marta encountered confusing parts, she reread them. This strategy sprang from the same question she asked in reading her own writing: Does this make sense?" (p. 725).

Researchers Robert J. Tierney and P. David Pearson say that reading and writing are both acts of composing. They maintain, "Most language accounts suggest that reading and writing are interrelated. They do not address the suggestion that reading and writing are multi-dimensional, multi-modal processes—both acts of composing" (1983, 579). Tierney and Pearson argue that both writing and reading consist of composing meaning.

In writing, the writer composes, or turns thoughts into words and arranges them on a page, so that a meaning-bearing message appears, one that is considered likely to be understood by the intended reader.

The writer, in effect, creates, usually with a sense of purpose and audience, a message to be read, and hopes that a reader will be able to recreate the thoughts and gain the intended message or experience. A reader, in turn, attempts to construct the meaning behind the words, based not only upon what appears on the page and what is apparently the author's intended message, but also upon whatever background experiences the reader brings to the task. The reader is composing personal meaning from the text, seeking to see how the message fits into, or adds to, what he or she already knows. Both the reader and the writer are trying to make sense of what is happening on the page, or to make it make sense.

Tierney and Pearson say that these acts of composing, writing and reading, involve continuous, recurring transactions among readers and writers, who are trying to perceive each other's intentions, purposes, and probable meanings. The Tierney and Pearson studies, among others (see Squire 1983), support the contention that writing and reading are essentially similar processes.

The articles are multiplying; the reports keep coming. The May 1983, issue of *Language Arts*, which centered on reading and writing with no dearth of articles on connections, described reading and writing as "two sides of the same basic process," discussed reading and writing "relationships," and set forth a variety of connection strategies, such as "a composing model of reading." Sandra Stotsky, in a review of the research in the same issue (May 1983), concludes, ". . . the correlational studies show almost consistently that better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers" (p. 636).

Stotsky writes that, in experimental studies, almost all that used writing activities specifically to improve reading comprehension found significant gains. Stotsky notes also that reading experience seems to be a consistent correlate of, or an influence on, writing ability. Finally, she wonders if the research is based on a theory that written language influences the development of meaning in oral language and that reading and writing influence each other directly. If so, it is time to reexamine theoretical foundations for curriculum development in both reading and writing. For a long time, schools have operated on a kind of "sequential" theory—oral language influences written language, and reading is a foundation for writing. Newer research findings seem to be providing support for a theory of reciprocity.

Of course, a good oral background in language is a prerequisite to reading and writing. This theory makes practical and pragmatic sense, since oral language is the primary language, and written language is a secondary symbol system, based on the oral. Yet recent research findings are compellingly insistent that it is not quite as clear cut, or as simple as oral language first, then written language. The interrelationships are complex.

One point is quite clear: written language development starts in infancy (Clay 1975; Cohn 1981). It starts far earlier than is popularly believed (see Temple, Nathan, and Burris 1982). Chomsky (1971) says that children are developmentally ready to write before they are ready to read and that their introduction to reading should be through writing. Since the words are already in mind when a child actually writes, some researchers such as Chomsky believe that a child can compose meaning more easily in this way than in reading, for in the latter process, the child has to deal with someone else's words. The research of Clay, Temple, and others supports the notion that children are developmentally able to write in the preschool years, and, in fact, go through several developmental stages in writing during these early years.

When young children are surrounded by a print environment, such as magazines and books in the home, signs at the shopping mall, and letters from relatives, they begin to relate to graphemes almost as soon as they begin to relate to the phonemes they are hearing all around them (see Tway 1983). Just as children make early attempts to participate in the oral environment with babbling and single word utterances, they also begin to notice writing and to use writing tools to make scribbles wherever they can find an inviting surface. As they grow and learn, they move from random scribbles to directional scribbles, and from unletter-like markings to separate configurations that resemble letters and that become recurring figures. From their observations of other people's writing and their own experiments with scribbling, they discover how to make letters, usually trying the letters of their name or copying some often-seen words, such as brand names. As they continue to develop, children discover that the letters stand for sounds in their language, and they will use invented spellings to write what they want. For example, a child might spell *you* with simply a *u*. All this can be accomplished in the pre-first-grade years—if children are not discouraged by unrealistic adult standards.

Preschoolers also discover that writing is reading. Right at the first directional scribbling, as Clay notes in *What Did I Write?* (1975), children know that writing is reading, for they expect an adult to

know what their scribbles mean, since adults can read. Writing appears to develop naturally along with the development of the other language arts, if conditions are favorable for this development. Writing in the home, encouragement of early writing attempts, and emphasizing reading-writing connections are all conditions that *lead to* parallel and interrelated development of writing and reading in the school years.

In my own observations and research at Miami University's McGuffey Laboratory School (1979–83), I found reading and writing going on almost simultaneously in the classroom. As Calkins did, I saw children read to enjoy what they had written, read to regain their inspiration, read to reestablish their train of thought, read to edit, and read to share with others. The reading was a way of reconnecting with their writing ideas. I saw children writing while surrounded by the books they were currently reading, or I saw them reading their choices from children's literature as a change of pace from their own writing.

A few months ago, I asked two of the young people who had been in one of the language arts classrooms that I observed to participate in the dedication of our university's new Heckert Center for Children's Reading and Writing. I asked them simply to come and say what reading and writing meant to them, respectively. One took the topic of reading, and the other, writing. I was struck by the similarities in the two presentations.

The "reading" student (Bonnie Kretschmer, Stewart School, Oxford, Ohio) said, "When I need to go somewhere exciting I travel without a ticket—to galaxies far, far away or to places where no one has ever gone before. Because a book will take you anywhere you want to go at your will at any time you want. . . ."

The "writing" student (Michael Idinopulos, formerly of McGuffey Laboratory School, currently a student at Talawanda High School, Oxford, Ohio) said, "In writing, we can take ourselves to a world we cannot otherwise experience. A world of our own creation, where we are not hindered by reality, for we determine what is reality and what is not."

Whether the student used a book (someone else's writing) to "take you anywhere," or personal writing to "take ourselves to a world we cannot otherwise experience," there seemed to be a common feeling of control or power. As one of the students said, ". . . we are limited only to the boundaries of our own imagination."

Marilyn A. Boutwell and Lucy McCormick Calkins observed the power that young children feel in reading and writing. Boutwell says, ". . . Lucy Calkins showed me how powerful and contagious

the energy is that comes from writing process. The energy was evident in our classroom writing workshop. But now the energy overflowed into my students' reading. We were swept along in its power, it bonded us closer and closer into a community of strategic readers as well as writers" (1983, 723).

All of these findings or observations lead to two important directions for those charged with the education of young children:

1. Writing should be supported and encouraged from the preschool years on; there should be no waiting for some future time when children are expected to be ready to write full-blown pieces without any preliminary development.
2. Reading and writing should be taught together in the elementary school; they should not be separated in the curriculum.

The Literature Connection

In "Reading Like a Writer," Frank Smith (1983) says, "To learn to write, children must read in a special kind of way" (p. 558). He explains that school should be the place where children are initiated into the club of writers as soon as possible, with full rights and privileges even as apprentices. Children grow as writers as they evaluate what they are doing by comparison with how things are done "by more experienced members of the club" (p. 567).

Literature for children provides the model *for comparison with more experienced members of the club.* Children who read are reading the creative writing of others. When they read the works of Lloyd Alexander, Natalie Babbitt, Virginia Hamilton, Madeleine L'Engle, and the like, they are apprenticed to the best children's literature has to offer. (See Townsend, *A Sounding of Storytellers* [1979] for good criticism of authors writing in English for today's children.) In turn, when children use ideas from the models and try writing their own way, they are having firsthand experience with what happens in literature; i.e., the decisions an author has to make, the way an author structures a piece, etc. Young writers cannot help but read in a new way: they write as readers; they read as writers.

Literature is not only the model for writers; it also provides a springboard for children's writing. Some books provide themes to explore further; others lend themselves to sequels or epilogues that enable young readers and writers to satisfy themselves about what happened "after" the end of the book. Still other works seem to encourage children to write about similar subjects, such as a journey, a place, or an interesting person.

Children's books sometimes have characters who like to write, who keep journals, write poems, write for school newspapers, write to sort out their feelings, and so forth. These writer-characters are convincing in their belief that writing is a purposeful pursuit, no doubt because the writers who write about them *know*. It is as though the authors are saying to their readers, "Writing is a way of life. Try it" (see Tway 1981).

The implications of the reading-writing connections are inescapable: To teach reading and writing, teachers must surround children with literature. Donald Graves (1983) suggests that teachers develop their own ways of surrounding children with literature. At every turn, he says, the teacher should seek to have children "live the literature." He concludes, "The most important living occurs at the point at which children *make* literature themselves through writing" (p. 75).

Yet creative endeavors are scarce in many classrooms. Children are put in the position of "receiving" language much more than they are allowed to "produce" it. Frank Smith writes, "The pervasiveness of the drills, exercises, and rote learning of programmatic literacy activities is such that some teachers tend to lose touch with what writing is really for" (Smith 1983, 566). Smith offers a "short and incomplete" list to show what writing is for:

> Writing is for stories to be read, books to be published, poems to be recited, plays to be acted, songs to be sung, newspapers to be shared, letters to be mailed, jokes to be told, notes to be passed, cards to be sent, cartoons to be labelled, instructions to be followed, designs to be made, recipes to be cooked, messages to be exchanged, programs to be organized, excursions to be planned, catalogs to be compared, entertainment guides to be consulted, memos to be circulated, announcements to be posted, bills to be collected, posters to be displayed, cribs to be hidden, and diaries to be concealed. (p. 566)

All the student needs is twenty-six letters to make the connections—to write anything that he or she or anyone else would want to read. Of course, the more experience students get with the ways other writers have used these twenty-six tools wonderfully and effectively, the more they will have to draw upon in transforming writing into interesting and worthwhile reading. School classrooms should be rich letter and word banks with the best that children's literature has to offer. If preschool children need a print environment to develop in their understanding of reading and writing, schoolchildren certainly need a print environment in which to continue to grow. This print environment can consist of a classroom library, school library, public library loan collection, children's magazines, and special collections of

other children's writings. Bulletin boards promoting books, book talks, storytelling, and read-aloud times can be used to introduce good writing to children. The Practice section of this book relies on children's literature as one of the main resources in showing reading-writing connections. For an elaboration of twenty-six ways to connect, continue to the Practice section.

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2 Practice

26 Ways to Connect

Twenty-six letters are all we need to read and write in English. These twenty-six letters of our alphabet are powerful tools and are always at our finger (or pencil) tips. Teachers will find a wealth of selections using these reading and writing tools available in alphabet books. These books appear in all forms on the market: books of pictures and captions, books with a running story throughout, informational books for older children, and so on. Alphabet books are not limited to the beginning of a literacy program or to younger children. To demonstrate, Part II will become a teacher-oriented alphabet book of ideas for practice.

A

The alphabet book can be a good place to begin in the elementary school literacy program. Norma Farber, author of several alphabet stories, says, "Some while ago I fell in love with the English language. Making alphabet stories is my way of writing love letters."

The following annotated list gives suggestions for using alphabet books as springboards to writing:

Farber, Norma. *This Is the Ambulance Leaving the Zoo.* Illustrated by Tomie dePaola. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1975.

A story of where and why the ambulance went tearing through the city and past alphabetical landmarks. Children might try their own alphabet adventures.

Fife, Dale. *Adam's A B C.* New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1971.

Adam, Arthur, and Albert live in the city, and share many city sights as they take the reader through the ABC's. Children could make up an ABC story about their own city or community.

Heide, Florence Parry. *Alphabet Zoop.* New York: McCall, 1970.

A delightfully humorous alphabet book filled with alliteration. Children can try their own alliterative lines for each letter.

Miles, Miska. *Apricot A B C.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1969. Illustrated by Peter Parnall.

A story of the world of nature. This book could encourage children to describe what's happening in the countryside.

Rey, H. A. *Curious George Learns the Alphabet.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

Most children love Curious George and his antics. His adventures with the alphabet should prove motivational.

Tallon, Robert. *Zoophabets.* New York: Scholastic, 1979. (paperback)

A delightful alphabet book of strange and fantastic animals from A (Alpok) to Z (Zurk). It will inspire children to create their own zany animals.

Tobias, Hosea, and Lisa Baskin. *Hosie's Alphabet*. New York: Viking, 1972.

An alphabet book with unusual vocabulary. This one could "stretch" children's minds, especially children who are advanced.

Wildsmith, Brian. *Brian Wildsmith's A B C*. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1962.

A book of colorful animals. Real animals can also stimulate children's interest in creating an animal alphabet book.

Children can find enjoyment and learning opportunity in making their own alphabet books. In turn, these books become part of the classroom reading experience. Elementary students throughout the grades can make alphabet books about topics in social studies, science, or other subject areas. The opportunities are almost limitless.

One science class studied insects and created an alphabet book about the interesting species they found. However, the children could not find enough insects for all the letters, so they made imaginary ones for some letters, starring those so that their readers would know the difference. An example of a starred letter for an imaginary insect was X, submitted by Karen G. to *The Book of Bugs*.

*X is for Xylophone Bug

The xylophone bug gets its name from the sound it makes. It makes many sounds while entertaining children in the hospital. It makes tunes that cheer sad children up. It is 5 inches long. He hits his arms against his stomach and makes a sound.

B

Bookmaking of all kinds provides an excellent way for children to experience firsthand the connections between reading and writing. There are class books that are the result of group effort—everyone contributes something to the book, a page, a story, a picture, an idea, or whatever. There are individual books as diverse as the individual children themselves, big books, little books, shape books (books shaped like their subjects, such as houses or trucks), and so on. Finally, there are yearbooks with the collected class stories of the year. (For a detailed description of "A Bookmaking Project," see *Time for Writing in the Elementary School* by Eileen Tway, NCTE/ERIC, 1984.)

Bulletin board stories provide an alternative to putting a longer story into a book. They do not replace books, but simply provide for variety in sharing. A child takes the pages of his or her story and any illustrations and instead of binding them into a book, arranges them attractively and in readable sequence on a large poster sheet, 24" × 36", for a bulletin board or a wall display. These displays make a colorful exhibit for Parent Open House, Write to Read Week, Book Week, etc., and they are good invitations for reading in classrooms, hallways, and libraries, at any time.

Books of writings by children for children, commercially published and available in libraries, are another way to show connections between writing and reading and to encourage children to write for each other. Some time-tested examples are as follows:

Baylor, Byrd. *And It Is Still That Way.* Legends told by Arizona Indian children. New York: Scribner's, 1976.

Jordan, June, and Terri Bush, eds. *The Voice of the Children.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1970.

Joseph, Stephen M. *The Me Nobody Knows.* Children's voices from the ghetto. New York: Avon, 1969.

Larrick, Nancy, ed. *I Heard a Scream in the Street.* Poetry by young people in the city. New York: M. Evans & Co., 1970.

Lewis, Richard, ed. *Miracles.* Poems by children of the English-speaking world. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966.

C

Character development is an important part of literature. As children read good literature, or have it read to them, the teacher can point out characterization and show how authors reveal character. Children find in their reading that authors do not just describe their characters; they *show* them—through their conversation, their actions, their interaction with others, and sometimes their thoughts. An example is Mafatu in *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry (Macmillan, 1940). Sperry helps the reader know the boy, Mafatu, and his sensitivities and fears. Mafatu has made an impression on readers and has stayed in the hearts and minds of these readers through the years. One modern third grader said if he lived in Mafatu's time and observed his outward behavior, he might have thought he was a coward, but since the author let him know Mafatu's thoughts, he realized that he would like Mafatu for a friend.

Children can try their hand at character sketches, can develop characterization in their stories, and can write sequels about favorite characters. Good examples of characterization to use as a model are found in the following books:

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *Shoeshine Girl.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975.

Sarah Ida does some growing up and learns to think more of others.

Burch, Robert. *Queenie Peavy.* New York: Viking, 1966.

Queenie Peavy is a thirteen-year-old girl, alternately defiant and caring in her behavior toward others, who learns that she must depend on her own determination if she is to grow up to be a responsible person.

Byars, Betsy. *After the Goat Man.* New York: Viking, 1974.

Harold learns to accept himself and to cope with his own problems a little better, as he compares his life with the lives of others he meets in this story.

Cleary, Beverly. *Ramona the Brave.* New York: Morrow, 1975.

The problems of a first grader loom large for Ramona, but she learns to deal with them bravely.

Lowry, Lois. *Anastasia Krupnik*. New York: Bantam, 1981.

Anastasia is one of the most delightfully original characters to come along in recent children's books.

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Avon Camelot, 1978.

Jess blossoms as a person through his friendship with new neighbor, Leslie.

Viereck, Phillip. *Terror on the Mountain*. New York: Scholastic, 1982.

Paul gets lost in a wild area, depends on himself to survive, and, in doing so, finds out more about himself.

Ideas for further writing (and talking) about characters are as follows:

Create clever names for characters in stories, names that seem to fit.

Write about what favorite characters will be doing in the future. For example, write about a grown-up Ramona (*Ramona the Brave*).

Have two favorites from different books meet, and create dialogue for them. For instance, write what Margaret (*Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* by Blume) and Harriet (*Harriet the Spy* by Fitzhugh) might say to each other if they met.

Stop at a decision-making point in a good book, and ask what you would do if you were in the character's place. Talk about how the story would be changed if the character made a different decision.

D

Dreams are a rich source of ideas for connecting reading and writing. A book that is a "natural" for stimulating a writing activity is Ezra Jack Keats' *Dreams* (Macmillan, 1974). In the story, Roberto makes a paper mouse in school and is proud of it, but a neighbor girl asks him, "Does it do anything?" Roberto could not think of an answer, and for this and other reasons does not immediately fall asleep at bedtime. He gets up to look out the window where he has placed his mouse, sees a strange dog attacking his friend's cat, accidentally knocks the mouse off the window sill in his excitement, and watches in awe while the mouse's shadow grows larger and larger as it falls in the moonlight. The dog also sees and runs off in fear, leaving the cat safe from harm. Roberto is impressed. "That was some mouse!" he says, and goes off to sleep and dream. End of book.

"What was he dreaming?" is a good question to use to get students talking or writing.

"What happened to the mouse afterward?" is a question which could stimulate a sequel to the story.

"Have you had an interesting dream?" can spark all kinds of activities.

Other books useful for promoting discussion or writing about dreams are listed below:

Aylesworth, Jim. *Tonight's the Night.* Illustrated by John C. Wallner. Chicago: Whitman, 1981.

In which a winged horse came to take Daniel to a dream.

Baker, Alan. *Benjamin's Dreadful Dream.* New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1980.

Benjamin, the hamster, has a beautifully illustrated dream, and not so dreadful, after all. Of course, it *is* disconcerting to him to wonder whether it really happened, or not.

Kuskin, Karla. *Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams: A Collection of Poems.* New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

See especially the poems on dreams, "the imaginings of sleep."

Rukeyser, Muriel. *More Night.* Illustrated by Symeon Shimin. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.

Jacob's grandmother talks to him about night and dreams.

E

Endings are a special part of reading. The culmination of a story—the impact of the ending—often stays with the reader for a long time. Sometimes, however, endings are less than satisfying for some readers and a disappointment to them. Whether endings are satisfying or not, sometimes it is interesting for the writer to compose a different ending for another author's story.

Some language arts authorities say that there is only one ending to a well-structured story and that writing a different ending can only lead to unfavorable comparisons between a child's writing and that of the original author. However, some stories seem to lend themselves to alternative endings and, in a supportive classroom, children should be able to enjoy different ways of working out an ending to a story—with appreciation for the differences.

A story like *Tico and the Golden Wings* (Pantheon, 1964) by Leo Lionni can lead to creative problem solving. Tico, a bird who has never had wings and who has had to be cared for by his friends, makes a wish and gets golden wings. Then his friends turn from him, saying that he thinks he is better than they are, with his golden wings. They leave him, and he is sad, wondering what to do. At this point in the story it is interesting to see what kinds of solutions to Tico's problem young writers can produce.

One fifth grader wrote that the other birds all flew away over a farmer's corn field, were shot and killed, and when they got to heaven, they all had golden wings. Leo Lionni's ending about individual differences is especially beautiful and should not be missed. Yet children can enjoy the humorous, fantastic, serious, and traditional endings that they create without taking away from the original author's artistry.

Experimenting with endings does not have to end with rewriting other people's endings to stories. It is also productive to encourage epilogues or sequels. This activity is especially good when an ending has not been satisfying, or is open-ended. Children like to achieve closure by telling what happened *afterward*. Also, when children become involved in reading a series of books by an author, it can be frustrating to find that a good book has no sequel—and satisfying to create a sequel for the book.

F

Fairy tales can provide much food for thought for readers and writers. A folklorist once said that fairy tales are not the opposite of reality, but an extension of reality. The tales often do seem to show the endurance of the human spirit, the part that hope and perseverance play in our lives, and the dignity of accepting the human condition. Iona and Peter Opie talk of "reality made evident" in fairy tales in the introduction to their book, *The Classic Fairy Tales* (Oxford University Press, 1974).

Fairy tales should be reintroduced to older children, if they think they have outgrown them. Hans Christian Andersen, with his great variety of tales, would be a good author to promote first. From the sad story "The Little Match Girl" to the riotous "Big Claus and Little Claus," there are all kinds of possibilities for writing, reading, and discussing in Andersen's stories. "The Ugly Duckling" can be discussed for its biographical account and "The Emperor's New Clothes" can provoke discussion of truth versus doublespeak.

The pervasive truth to notice about Andersen's writings is that he wrote what he knew about: the poverty of his childhood, the ducklings along the river where he once played, the farmers and soldiers of his boyhood town, and so on. Even though poor, Andersen's father was a reader and he often read to his young son. In this respect, he left Andersen a rich legacy. Readers of Andersen's tales and of his life story will learn the following tips for writing success:

If you want to write, read.

If you want to write, practice writing.

If you want to write, be a good observer.

If you want to write, write what you know about.

Ideas for reading and writing, using fairy tales as springboards, are listed below:

Try writing a fairy tale in a modern setting, one that you know well.

Rewrite a favorite tale from a different point of view (perhaps the parents' view in Hansel and Gretel).

Try reading a different writer of fairy tales, one that is not as well known as Andersen.

G

Genre, the term for different forms of writing, is an important concept to keep in mind when selecting reading and writing activities. A writing-reading program should be broad in its coverage of different kinds of writing. Stephen Tchudi (Judy) has a list in *Explorations in the Teaching of Secondary English* (Dodd, Mead, 1975) entitled "Some Neglected Forms of Composition (or, Must They Always Write Essays?)" (p. 91). He includes short stories, plays, poetry, and other standard forms on the list, but also puts in such forms as memoirs, journals, sketches, and profiles among the many possibilities to consider.

Literature provides exposure to its many different forms and gives children firsthand experience with kinds of writing other than the story or the essay. Tchudi includes in the list mentioned above "imitations of established writers." Whether or not children experiment with this kind of writing, it is certain that they need to read the works of established writers and internalize the understanding of different forms before they can branch out in their own exploration of forms.

Here is a list of "Some Neglected Kinds of Literature (or Must They Always Read Realistic Fiction?)"

Poetry

Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams. Karla Kuskin. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.

A delightful collection of Kuskin

Biography

Watt Got You Started, Mr. Fulton? A Story of James Watt and Robert Fulton. Robert Quackenbush. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982. (picture book)

An explanation of how Watt's invention helped Fulton with his

Science Fiction

Omega Station. Alfred Slote. Illustrated by Anthony Kramer. New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1983.

About adventure, robots, and outer space (intermediate)

Plays/Drama

Picture Book Theater: The Mysterious Stranger and The Magic Spell. Beatrice Schenk de Regniers. Illustrated by William Lahey Cummings. New York: Clarion, 1982. (picture book)

Two plays for reading or acting

Legend

The Gift of the Sacred Dog. Paul Goble. Scarsdale, N. Y.: Bradbury Press, 1980. (picture book)

A story of Indians and their horses

Sports Writing

Assignment: Sports. Robert Lipsyte. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

A collection of Lipsyte's sports stories from newspaper and television

Cumulative Tale

The Napping House. Audrey Wood. Illustrated by Don Wood. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. (picture book)

A story built on much repetition

Children who read a variety of kinds of literature will be more likely to produce a variety of written products as personal and classroom reading for themselves and others.

H

Holidays are a constant source of ideas and motivation for both teachers and children in the elementary school. Since holiday topics are so pervasive in classrooms, they are natural ones to promote yearlong reading and writing. Lee Bennett Hopkins, an author and anthologist, has edited an entire bibliography of books having to do with holidays. Starting with Hopkins's books is a good way to associate writing and reading with holiday observances. Books to use include the following anthologies:

Hey-How for Halloween. Illustrated by Janet McCaffrey. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974. (poetry)

Merrily Comes Our Harvest In: Poems for Thanksgiving. Illustrated by Ben Shecter. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. (poetry)

Sing Hey for Christmas Day! Illustrated by Laura Jean Allen. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975. (poetry)

Good Morning to You, Valentine. Illustrated by Tomie dePaola. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975. (poetry)

Easter Buds Are Springing. Illustrated by Tomie dePaola. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979. (poetry)

Beat the Drum: Independence Day Has Come. Illustrated by Tomie dePaola. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. (poetry)

Witching Time. Illustrated by Vera Rosenberry. Chicago: Whitman, 1977. (prose and poetry)

A-Haunting We Will Go. Illustrated by Vera Rosenberry. Chicago: Whitman, 1977. (prose and poetry)

The Sky Is Full of Song. Illustrated by Dirk Zimmer. New York: Harper & Row, 1983. (poems about the seasons and assorted holidays)

Hopkins has also coauthored a teacher's almanac entitled *Do You Know What Day Tomorrow Is?* (Hopkins and Arenstein, Citation, 1975). This book offers interesting events and anecdotes for every day of the year. It can help children get acquainted with lesser-known holidays. Teachers and their students can branch out from this book to find special days of other cultures. Books such as the following belong in classroom libraries in our multicultural country:

The Hanukkah Book. Marilyn Burns. Illustrated by Martha Weston. New York: Four Winds Press, 1981.

Light Another Candle: The Story and Meaning of Hanukkah. Miriam Chaikin. Illustrated by Demi. New York: Clarion, 1981.

Piñatas and Paper Flowers: Holidays of the Americas in English and Spanish. Lila Perl. Spanish version by Alma Flor Ada. Illustrated by Victoria de Larrea. New York: Clarion, 1983.

Holiday headlines can be created to advertise little-known facts about all kinds of special days. Hopkins suggests creating a class calendar committee. A class could make its own holiday almanac with headlines for noteworthy events or days. The "Almanac" would make a worthwhile writing project, involving lots of reading, researching, writing, and then reading again.

I

Imaginary friends can be important influences in children's lives. Many children have imaginary playmates when they are very young and then outgrow these friends as they go to school and get more actively involved with real friends. However, they usually do not forget these early friends and can easily relate to book friends in their storybooks or to characters that they themselves create on paper through drawing and writing. Sometimes these reading and writing characters have very strong identities. Chris, a sixth-grade boy, writes about a space hero named Todd. Todd is so real to Chris that he is like an alter ego. Sometimes Chris signs his school papers with Todd's name instead of his own. Chris's classmates like to read about Todd's adventures, and often they speak of Todd as though he were one of them.

Getting to know a character like an alter ego is a way that many authors start writing a book. Author Robert Burch says that his ideas for books always start with the characters (Unpublished speech, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, July 1971.). The characters grow and the plot or action develops out of their natures, their motivations, or their desires. Children can look to literature to see how authors develop characters, and in this way literature can serve as a model for writing.

Children can also write about their imaginary friends, either past or current, and work on characterization in this way. Just as young children sometimes have a special day in which to share their favorite stuffed toys, older children may want a "show and tell" period to exchange stories about their imaginary friends. Then a collection of descriptions or word pictures could be gathered into a class book of Imaginary Friends.

Books commercially available for the classroom library that deal with imaginary friends include the following:

The Year of Mr. Nobody. Cynthia King. Illustrated by Malcolm Carrick. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

Abbot's friend serves a useful purpose to him in the growing-up time of the year before going to school. This is the story of the imaginary friend of a very young child.

The People in Pineapple Place. Anne Lindbergh. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.

A ten-year-old boy discovers not one, but several imaginary friends, in Pineapple Place, a part of Washington, D.C., that is

sometimes there, sometimes not, as the imaginary people travel in time. These people of Pineapple Place serve a very important part in the boy's life during a difficult time of transition.

Behind the Attic Wall. Sylvia Cassedy. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983.

Twelve-year-old Maggie, who went to live with her great-aunts after several boarding schools in a row dismissed her for "poor adjustment," finds magic, love, and caring with mysterious friends behind the attic wall.

The variety of ages of the characters in these books illustrates that imaginary friends have a place throughout the elementary school years.

J

A journal is a writer's friend and a place to explore feelings, to record events, to jot down ideas, to make notes about reading discoveries, and to write. Author Patricia Lee Gauch says that a journal is a gift to oneself (Unpublished speech, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, July 1983.). Many authors tell of keeping or exploring ideas in their journals for later extended writing. Donald Murray, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning author, advises writers to keep a log or daybook to record where they are in their writing and write down any notes for later use. For example, a writer may have an idea for the final resolution or ending of a story and will make a note of it so that the writing of the story has direction. Murray says, "The most valuable writing tool I have is my daybook" (*Write to Learn*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984, 11).

So that children can see how others use journals, it is good to have several books about journal-keepers in the classroom library. Some examples are as follows:

Anastasia Krupnik. Lois Lowry. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

Anastasia keeps lists of things she loves and things she hates.

Harriet the Spy. Louise Fitzhugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Harriet keeps a notebook in which she describes scenes, events, and personalities. She also learns a valuable lesson about appropriate uses of her notebook.

The Last of Eden. Stephanie S. Tolan. New York: Frederick Warne, 1980.

Michelle takes her journal with her everywhere.

Teachers who want to encourage their students to use journals or daybooks will do well to set aside ten minutes a day for writing in these books so that the habit is formed. Children can, of course, use the books for notes whenever they find something or get an idea that they want to remember. Teachers may want to use the term "jotter books" instead of journals just to encourage on-the-spot jotting of ideas or happenings.

K

Kits for making books are wonderfully inviting devices for getting children started with writing-into-reading. The kits can consist of construction paper (or other kinds of) covers, lined paper for writing, and blank paper for illustrating. If these kits are part of a learning center, the caption can read, "Here's a book that needs a story."

Commercial (trade) books without words can also serve as a special kind of motivating kit to get children into "making reading" for the books. The writing for wordless books can consist of captions, descriptions, or stories.

A few wordless books to use as starters are suggested:

Airplane Ride. Douglas Florian. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1984.

Charlie-Bob's Fan. W. B. Park. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

The Other Bone. Ed Young. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

The Scribble Monster. Jack Kent. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

Up a Tree. Ed Young. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.

L

Letter writing for any reason—a thank-you note, an exchange between friends, a unique device for telling a story, or whatever—provides good reading for recipients. Some children may enjoy writing stories by means of a series of letters between two characters. The story unfolds as the characters write to each other. Examples found in literature are rare, but noteworthy. Two examples of special interest to children are as follows:

Dear Mr. Henshaw. Beverly Cleary. New York: Morrow, 1983. (Tips on writing, in general, are also part of this book.)

Letters to Pauline. James Krüss. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

Letters are almost always viewed as welcome reading material. Stories about letter writing, such as Ezra Jack Keats's *A Letter to Amy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), or books that are collections of real letters, such as Rudyard Kipling's *O Beloved Kids* (for mature readers only, these are letters to his children, edited by Elliot L. Gilbert, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), may be good motivators for letter writing. However, nothing really motivates writers like the thought of getting a response. Some teachers encourage this writing for response by asking children to write to an imaginary character, such as a room mascot, and then answering each child's letter as though it came from the character. This is a time-consuming activity for teachers, and results can be as rewarding, or more so, when children write to each other or to pen pals far away.

For more ideas on letter writing, see *P.S. Write Soon!* produced by the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the U.S. Postal Service, 1982 (for grades 4–8). This booklet is filled with ideas, such as writing a story with an out-of-town friend by writing a part of the story, sending it to the friend for continuation, and adding to the story, each in turn, until the story is concluded and the letter writers start another. Letters offer the opportunity for reading and writing at a most pleasurable stage for most young readers and writers. There is anticipation (and excitement) in opening a sealed letter and reading its contents.

M

Myths are like the explanations of large and small mysteries. Storytelling (and writing) has much of its roots in the attempt to explain life or the mysteries of the world and the universe. Myths are a good avenue for productive writing experiences in the classroom. Whether they are called "why" stories, pourquoi stories, or myths, these stories evoke a creative response. It is best to read several myths to a class before any writing is attempted. Rudyard Kipling's *Just-So Stories* are excellent for reading aloud. Another stimulus to the discussing or writing of myths is the visual delight of a film like *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* adapted from the book of the same name by Verna Aardema with illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon and produced by Weston Woods.

Currently there seems to be a resurgence of interest in Greek and Roman mythology in the elementary school. Olivia Coolidge's *Greek Myths* (Houghton Mifflin, 1949) and Thomas Bulfinch's *Myths of Greece and Rome* (Penguin, 1981) are good books with which to begin. Donna E. Norton also has a passage in her children's literature textbook, *Through the Eyes of a Child*, (Merrill, 1983) that gives reading-writing connections for using myths: "Creative Writing Motivated by Mythology," (p. 247).

Children of any age enjoy creating their own myths, legends, and "why" stories, such as how the horse got its mane, and many classes collect these stories for a keepsake anthology. More ambitious myths about the origin of the world, of beliefs, or of customs, can be attempted after reading several Greek, Roman, Indian, Norse, Chinese, or other culture's myths. The myths of other cultures and myths created by children provide substantial reading for intermediate-age classes.

N

Newspapers are a good source for reading and writing activities. The following chart gives an alphabetical list of twenty-six of the nearly infinite ideas for writing found in the typical newspaper.

A Ads/Advice Column
B Book Reviews
C Comic Captions
D Digests of News
E Editorials
F Features
G Games/Puzzles
H Headlines
I Items and Ideas
J Journalistic-style Stories
K Kudos—Credits to Leaders
L Letters to the Editor
M Mixed-up News Stories
N News Commentaries
O Opinions
P Political Cartoons
Q Quips/Jokes
R Reviews of Restaurants/ Movies
S Sports/Serial Stories
T Travel Stories
U Undercover Stories
V Vocabulary Teasers
W Want Ads/Weather Reports
X Xerox-Your-Own Newspaper
Y Youth Page
Z Zodiac/Horoscope

For more ideas, see a booklet called *Newsschool: Using the Newspaper to Teach Language Arts* by Marilyn Olsen (Dale Seymour Publications, 1984, Blackline Masters). Examples in literature of children who like newspaper writing are also found occasionally. Some of these examples are listed below:

Harriet the Spy. Louise Fitzhugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.

Mysteriously Yours, Maggie Marmelstein. Marjorie Weinman Sharmat. Illustrated by Ben Shecter. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

We Interrupt This Semester for an Important Bulletin. Ellen Conford. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979.

A class newspaper that can be duplicated inexpensively and shared with others makes an excellent project to give a unifying purpose for a variety of kinds of writing. The locality's daily newspaper, children's newspapers available from Scholastic and other companies, and the class's own newspaper are splendid resources for helping develop children's communication skills.

O

Ovations, observances, and outstanding awards for children's favorite books are much needed. For years, awards have been given to children's books by adults. Adults make such awards as the well-known Newbery Medal for distinguished contributions to American literature for children, or the Hans Christian Andersen Prize, the first international children's book award. Children's books are written by adults, published by adults, usually selected and purchased by adults, and it is only left to children to accept or reject what adults have chosen for them. An opportunity for children to give awards to their favorite "acceptances" will serve two purposes: 1) give recognition to children as the consumers of children's literature; and 2) help adults to better understand what children value in their literature.

Fortunately, there is now precedent for children's choices. For the past ten years, teams of children have read new children's trade books each year and have voted for their favorites. Books receiving the highest number of votes are called "Children's Choices." Sponsored by the International Reading Association and the Children's Book Council Joint Committee, the winning book titles are published each year in *The Reading Teacher*.

Many states also have state-wide awards based on children's choices. Among them are Ohio (Buckeye Book Award); Indiana (Young Hoosier Award); Colorado (Colorado Children's Book Award); and Georgia (Georgia Children's Book Award). Teachers should check in their own states if their schools do not already participate in such an award.

To make the recognition for children more immediate and local, schools can sponsor school-wide awards or individual classes can develop their own. The award can be modeled after the state award, but on a smaller scale.

Suggestions for classes include the following:

Have a contest to name ten "best books" to put in a time capsule for the future.

Have a monthly "best-seller" or Best Reading List.

Create a Special Award seal for best book of the year.

Observe Book Award Day.

P

Point of view is a story element that is important to the reader and writer of any age. Very young children sometime have trouble keeping themselves out of a story that they have started to write in third person and will switch back and forth into first person. Perhaps this switching into first person shows how important the point of view is to the child. After all, it is through point of view that the story is revealed, and the writer is immersed in the story. Sharing stories with children and talking with them about "who" is telling the story will help them keep the point of view straight. As children grow in experience in general and in story writing experience in particular, they can experiment with point of view in their writing and vary their selections of "who" tells the story, without confusing the reader.

Possibilities for "playing around" with point of view include rewriting traditional tales from a different point of view, such as doing "The Three Little Pigs" from the point of view of the wolf, or trying some of the different techniques found in contemporary literature for children. Their classmates will enjoy reading these creative "twists." The following books can be models for ideas to try:

Blume, Judy. *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great.* New York: Dell, 1972.

——— . *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing.* New York: Dell, 1972.

Both of Blume's books are written in the first person.

Norton, Mary. *The Borrowers Avenged.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.

The Borrowers are tiny persons only five or six inches tall, and it can be interesting to children to see how things and events appear to someone that size.

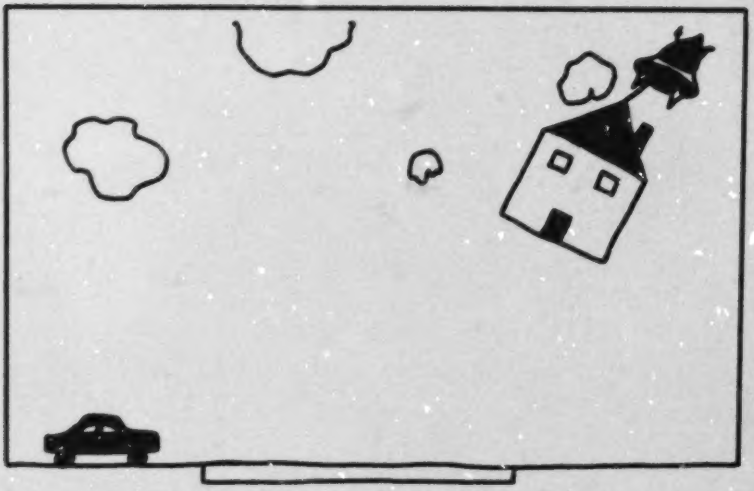
Oppenheimer, Joan L. *Gardine vs. Hanover.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1982.

A story of a family, or rather two families trying to merge into one family, with the points of view of two very different stepsisters revealing the drama and trauma of the merger.

Rodgers, Mary. *Summer Switch*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

A story of stepping into someone else's shoes. In this case a young boy and his father become each other for the summer. The points of view of each facing the other's problems make hilarious reading.

How a story unfolds is determined by the point of view of the storyteller. Learning to handle point of view skillfully is one of the marks of a mature writer. The skillful treatment of point of view is extremely important in making writing believable for the reader. In addition, a unique treatment can be highly entertaining or dramatic.



Martha, I think the house has been robbed!

Figure 1. By Michael Reed, Woodbury, Minnesota. Reprinted from *The McGuffey Writer*, vol. 7, no. 1, Fall, 1983.

Q

Quips, jests, and jokes may seem like slight material for writing, but it is precisely their slightness or brevity that gives them a place in the writing program. They are short pieces of one, two, or at most a few sentences and offer a change of pace from serious writing, or a chance for reluctant writers to get started with short, but entertaining, material. Quips may simply be clever captions for creative cartoons. Many, if not most, children get started writing through their drawing. Drawing is an important way to tell a story, especially for the young child. Short, humorous captions for drawings make good reading for classroom displays or bulletin boards.

Trade books to read for inspiration and ideas are not difficult to find, thanks to compilers like Charles Keller and Alvin Schwartz. Some of their books that children find amusing follow:

Keller, Charles. *The Nutty Joke Book.* Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

——— . *School Daze.* Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978. (a collection of jokes and riddles about school)

——— . *Still Going Bananas.* Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980. (more jokes and riddles)

Schwartz, Alvin. *Kickle Snifters and Other Fearsome Creatures.* Illustrated with line drawings by Glen Rounds. New York: Bantam, 1976.

——— . *Flapdoodle: Pure Nonsense from American Folklore.* New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1980.

In the cartoon on the facing page (Figure 1), Mike, a fifth grader, has made a drawing that gives his "one liner" caption a humorous interpretation. This kind of writing can be highly motivational for intermediate-age children and may lead to the writing of longer pieces. A collection of such cartoons would make an entertaining booklet and a unique addition to the children's own books in the classroom.

R

Round-Robin storytelling is not limited to oral language experience; it can be a written experience, too—perhaps for rainy day fun. One person can start the story, write about a paragraph's worth, and pass it on for the next person to continue. The written version of "round-robin" works better in small groups so that the waiting time for the story to be completed, read, and heard is not very long. In oral storytelling, the fun coincides with the telling as other participants listen, and the activity can involve a whole class. However, when students write the story, each person writing a portion of it in turn, the fun comes after the writing, when the story is read aloud to the group. To create a purely nonsensical tale, each writer should fold his or her part over, except for the last line, as the story is passed to the next student so that none of the writers knows what the others have written prior to the line left to be continued. The illogic and non sequiturs of such a story make for hilarious oral reading.

Students can also try a round-robin viewpoint in their individual writing. They can let characters take turns telling a story. *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel (Dell, 1968, for older students—junior high/middle school and above) is told chapter by chapter with a boy and a girl alternating the telling. In *Summer Switch* by Mary Rodgers (Harper & Row, 1982, for intermediate-age students and above), the story is told by a boy and his father with the two characters alternating the telling chapter by chapter. In addition, the print is small in the chapters with the father as the viewpoint character and large in the chapters told by the son. Books like *The Pigman* and *Summer Switch* can be a stimulus for experimenting with the different ways to tell a story and a refreshing change of pace for writing and reading.

Retelling stories can also be valuable experience for young writers and readers. Retelling favorite stories, either orally or in writing, provides experience with sequencing, summarizing, and structuring stories. As well as being one way to experience more fully the model of a good story, it is also a means to achieve better understanding or comprehension in reading. A child must read in a special way in order to retell someone else's writing.

S

Script writing and storytelling can be equally important and interesting components of a classroom literacy program. Script writing is a kind of writing that can be especially intriguing for children of the television era. Whether it is a script prepared to be used in a videotaped presentation, a script prepared as a pretend-radio-script to be turned into an audiotaped presentation, or simply a script for a play to be presented "live" in the classroom, script writing offers many opportunities for interrelating the language arts. A class can contact a local television station and ask for a copy of a script so that children can become familiar with the form. Possibilities for writing include docudramas centered on current events; plays based on stories created by the children or on favorite stories in children's literature; and comical skits. While script writing is a writing-reading activity, it becomes a speaking-listening activity in the performance. In addition, other arts involved are visual art and music. Children will want to give their plays the professional touches of appropriate background scenery and taped musical accompaniment.

For an excellent source of ideas for script writing in the elementary classroom, see *Teaching Communication Skills in the Elementary School*, Chapter 15, "Drama: Dramatizing, Adapting, Writing" by Gertrude Boyd and Daisy Jones (Van Nostrand, 1977). For ideas for older students, see *Adolescent Literature: Response and Analysis* (pages 174–77) on students writing scripts for film and television (by Robert E. Probst, Charles E. Merrill, 1984). In *Creative Drama in the Classroom* (Longman, 1984), Nellie McCaslin says that there is now a developing interest in playwriting with and by children. She tells of elementary schools that have experimented with having playwrights-in-residence to work directly with children to promote an ongoing interest in the dramatic form and improvement in written communication. It seems fitting that script writing, a very important medium in modern communication, is getting more recognition today as a part of elementary school language arts.

S also stands for Story. Adults may take "story" for granted; it is such a commonplace term. Yet the human proclivity for storytelling is a wonderful phenomenon and one on which teachers can capitalize. We are all natural storytellers. We tell what happened to us in the shopping center, what we saw on the way to school, or whatever adventures or mishaps are part of our experience. "Everyone has a story to tell," Donald Graves says. "Teachers can help draw out these stories in the classroom" (Unpublished speech, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, April 19, 1984).

For young children, the sequencing of events or the shaping of stories may be difficult, as they often tend to ramble. Sharing many stories from literature can give children more of a "sense of story." This sense of story can help children in both reading and writing. In reading, a sense of story will help children to predict, to know what to expect, to read with more comprehension. In writing, children learn to tell their own stories, to give shape to their experience. John S. Mayher and his coauthors in *Learning to Write/Writing to Learn* (Boynton/Cook, 1983) say, "As events swirl about us, the stories we tell and imagine are the means by which we make sense of our own lives" (p. 10).

In *Tell Me a Mitzi* by Lore Segal (Farrar, Straus, 1970), Mitzi learns more about herself and her "history" through stories about herself. Likewise, young children can tell their own stories, using their names in this way: "Tell me a Judy" or "Tell me a Joey." Some children will be inspired to tell their own school stories by *Shawn Goes to School* by Petronella Breinburg (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973) or by *Ramona the Brave* by Beverly Cleary (Morrow, 1975).

Older children will find a book like *Nobody's Family Is Going to Change* by Louise Fitzhugh (Dell, 1975)—in which Emma is true to herself and sticks to her dream of becoming a lawyer—encouragement for thinking about their own strengths as people. Students can explore these strengths through writing and learn more about themselves in the process. Whether telling tales or writing personal narratives, students will find "story" a key word in personal reading-writing connections.

T

Team writing is a group writing activity that takes the loneliness out of writing, provides a multitude of ideas for writing, offers a change of pace in the writing program, and gives support to reluctant writers. As any writer knows, it can be difficult at times to conceive an idea (or ideas), organize the related ideas, decide where to start writing, structure and execute the writing once started, come to a satisfactory ending, and rework the writing to a finished product. The whole process, complex and involved, can be overwhelming at times, even to accomplished writers. On the other hand, when the tasks are shared by several writers, there are more ideas, more people to help structure, and the whole enterprise goes more quickly, or so it seems.

Adults often coauthor stories, articles, and books. Children ought to be afforded the same privilege of coauthorship. Children's book authors who provide examples of working together are Vera Cleaver and Bill Cleaver; James Collier and Christopher Collier; and Florence Parry Heide and Roxanne Heide. The books of these authors show that the story comes out as a single production, not a hodgepodge, if there is cooperation.

A group of two or more children may decide on a project on their own, or the teacher may set the stage for a class team writing activity, using a story starter to get the teams going. Workable story starters are listed below:

1. Ask the students to pretend that they are in a plane taking a special class trip to Hawaii when their plane has to ditch in the Pacific. Fortunately, an island is nearby and everyone is saved, but the island is unknown and uncharted. The students must do some creative problem solving and tell how they survived and what happened to them after they arrived on the island.
2. Ask the students to pretend that it is a lazy, sunshiny day in the classroom and they begin to daydream about what lies beyond the vent (or other outlet) in the classroom. Suddenly they find themselves in a strange place beyond the vent. The students are to "create" the place and tell about their adventures there.
3. Ask the students to pretend that they have gone to camp and that their group has decided to explore in the woods. Now they have lost their way and have come upon a strange object

in the woods. The students are to describe the object, explain how it affects them, and relate how, if at all, it influences their survival in the woods.

A note of caution is in order here. If any student feels frustrated, bothered, or constrained by writing with a group, that student should be permitted to "take off" with his or her own ideas and write an individual story. It is the writing experience that is important, not whether it is done in groups or singly.

Team writing *can* be a way of learning more about what happens in the writing process, as children talk over their plans with each other—ideas, decisions, etc. For those children who enjoy the team experience and the ideas generated in a group, team writing has many possibilities. Not limited to fiction nor to language arts class, it can cut across the curriculum as children do factual reports together in health, science, social studies, or any subject.

U

Unearthly tales intrigue children, and motivation will usually be high for the writing of tales like these. The activity does not have to be only a Halloween event, either. For example, the books of the Eerie Series published by J. B. Lippincott can be enjoyed all year and will provide inspiration for student attempts to write their own eerie stories. *Creatures from Lost Worlds* (1979) by Seymour Simon and *Meet the Vampire* (1979) by Georgess McHargue are titles in the Eerie Series that intermediate-age children will enjoy. For younger children, books like *Two Monsters* by Lucretia Fisher (Stemmer House, 1976); *Don't Tell Me a Ghost Story* by Phyllis Rose Eisenberg (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982); and *Dracula's Cat* by Jan Wahl (Prentice-Hall, 1978) will prove to be models for gentle or humorous unearthly stories.

For upper grades, Bantam's Choose Your Own Adventure Story #31, *Vampire Express*, by Tony Koltz (1984), will get students personally involved in the story and perhaps inspire them to write more unearthly adventures for themselves and their classmates to read. *The Phantom Hand and Other American Hauntings* by Walter Harter (Prentice-Hall, 1976) will get students interested in American ghost stories. Native American stories make good reading, too. For example, *The Whistling Skeleton: American Indian Tales of the Supernatural*, collected by George Bird Grinnell and edited by John Bierhorst (Four Winds, 1982), may inspire modern creations with a supernatural flavor.

Unearthly subjects may be "out of this world," but they still appeal to earthly youngsters and make for intriguing writing and reading. Stretching the imagination with an unearthly topic may be a way of honing skills in using imagery. Mike (one of the students with whom the author worked in an investigation of the writing of middle-school-aged children), an upper-elementary student when the following story was written, went through a period of writing such unearthly pieces as graphic descriptions of nightmares and tales of trees walking around scaring people before he reached junior high school, when he started doing more adventure and mystery stories. He seemed to be sharpening his skills in writing description, setting, and situation, using vivid appeals to senses.

My Experience with the Devil

It was a cold winter night. I stared into the fireplace where there was a small fire going. All of a sudden the fire roared up

to a great blaze! Then it started to catch on fire. I ran but the fire followed me. I tried pouring water on, but the fire kept roaring up. All of a sudden the flames engulfed me, but I did not burn. I felt a strange whirling and I was in an atmosphere where all there was, was fire. Then an awful-looking creature came up to me. It had a tail with a spade-shaped tip. Its eyes were scarlet fire. I knew it was the heart of evil. It was a devil.

"Hello," hissed the devil. "I am Satan. Of all the goodie-goodies on earth, I picked you to turn into a devil."

I tried to run but my feet were like lead. Even if I could have run, there was no place to go. I was in the deepest corner of hell. The devil said some evil-sounding words and there was a loud crash and a flash of lightning but nothing happened.

"The spell didn't work!" hissed the devil. "It's the force from above!"

All of a sudden there was a swirling and I was back home.

V

Verse, a lighthearted term for poetry, is just what is needed to get some children started reading and writing. Short two- or four-liners are not forbidding or inhibiting, and the rhythm and rhyme appeal to young language makers. Some will get carried away with the pleasure of it all and read and write several verses.

Stories told in rhyme are predictable and usually fairly easy to read. Examples of books for children are stories by Dr. Seuss, including *McElligott's Pool*, 1947; *The Cat in the Hat*, 1957; and *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, 1960 (all Random House books). Another more recent example is *While the Moon Shines Bright*, a bedtime chant by Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson (Harper & Row, 1981). Iona and Peter Opie, well-known collectors of children's lore and language, arranged nursery rhymes or verses into an anthology, saying in essence that these rhymes are first reading for children (*The Puffin Book of Nursery Rhymes*, Penguin, 1963).

Lee Bennett Hopkins has collected short works of well-known poets for an "I Can Read Book" (*Surprises*, Harper & Row, 1984) to promote children's first reading enjoyment. Verses by Myra Cohn Livingston, Eve Merriam, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, Carl Sandburg, Aileen Fisher, and many other fine poets are included.

Older children will enjoy reading *Poems of Lewis Carroll* selected by Myra Cohn Livingston (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973). Lewis Carroll created wonderful nonsensical passages and parodies that make reading verse an unexpectedly amusing pastime for the upper-elementary student. Parodies of the parodies almost beg to be written as one reads this collection of Carroll's poems. Whether it is lighthearted verse or serious poetry, the experience will make reading and writing take on new dimensions.

W

Whoppers and tall tales are legitimate reasons to tell lies. It is fun to try to tell the biggest whopper. Whether one stretches the truth or stretches the tale out on a tall piece of paper, these whoppers can be mind-stretching. They make good reading for classroom bulletin boards and lead into reading tall tales of America's history. Some of the old favorites are the stories of Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, John Henry, and Mike Fink. For more information and stories, the teacher should see a book on American folklore, such as *A Treasury of American Folklore* edited by B. A. Botkin (Bantam Abridged Edition, 1981).

Classroom tall tales enable a class to start their own collection of lore and legends. Joe Hanson, an eighth grader, allowed his tall tale, reprinted below, to be published in a magazine of young people's writing and, thus, many others could read his writing.

The Tall Tale That's A Little Short

There once was a man named Fred. He was very short. As a matter of fact, he was very, very short. He was so short, he had to jump up to touch the floor. He used to saddle cockroaches to get from place to place. Once in a while, when he had to go a really long distance (like across the room), he'd lasso a fly and jump on its back. One time, Fred fell off of a fly and into the carpet. It took him months to find his way out. It's a good thing he only has carpet in two rooms of his house.

One day Fred met a woman who was just right for him. Well, come to think of it, she was a little taller than him. But only about thirty-eight stories. Her name was Lulu. Lulu was very tall. As a matter of fact, she was very, very tall. She was so tall, she had to hang blinking lights from her head at night to warn low flying planes. Once in a contest, it only took her twenty-three-and-a-half steps to walk all the way around the world and back. Another time Lulu was at a basketball game and almost stepped on Wilt Chamberlain. In a National Geographic movie about redwood trees, she played the tallest one.

In spite of their small height difference, Fred and Lulu got married, and were very happy together. As a matter of fact, they were very, very happy together. They found in each other what they themselves lacked. He would remind her to be careful not to step on the pet dog. She would help him out of the cracks in the sidewalk when he occasionally fell in them. They lived happily ever after. Moral: If you're short, you're short; if you're tall, you're tall; but love is the most important thing of all.

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X

Xeroxing or mimeographing children's stories for themselves and others to keep and to read over and over leads this section into "Y" and the keeping of special yearbooks or classroom anthologies. Evelyne Robey, an Ohio teacher and supervisor for many years who worked with the Young Authors Program in the Cincinnati area, once said that children's own books are among the few things they have to treasure and keep in a "throwaway society."

Y

Yearbooks are a special treasure because they contain a treasury of children's writings, selected by the children as their best efforts of the year. Parent volunteers, school secretaries, teacher aides, and teachers cooperate to reproduce the children's stories for inclusion in the class book. Sometimes older children themselves type or print on ditto masters so that they can share their writings. Enough yearbooks should be made so that other classes can have a copy for their room libraries, and, of course, the central library or media center should get a copy. It is good "public" relations to share copies with school board members and other interested community members. If a class has access to offset equipment, this kind of reproduction gives the yearbook a special dignity and quality. The main consideration is the collection and celebration of a class's "best" writing.

Z

Zoophabets, the zany alphabet book by Robert Tallon (Scholastic, 1979), makes a good conclusion to an "alphabet" listing of ideas for connecting writing and reading. It is an alphabet book of imaginary animals with a writing pattern of where the animal lives and what the animal eats that is formulaic and easy to follow. Students from elementary school age to graduate school will enjoy creating their own "zoophabets." One university class ended its zany animal alphabet book with the following creation:

> Z is for ZARDUTHALLA
> Lives in: Zoos in Zombia
> Eats: Zebras, zinwillies.

Each imaginary animal is accompanied by an equally imaginary illustration. This reading-writing-reading activity will allow for as much creativity as the students can muster.

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Benjamin's Dreadful Dream. Alan Baker. J. B. Lippincott, 1980. (dreams)

Brian Wildsmith's ABC. Brian Wildsmith. Franklin Watts, 1962. (ABC books)

Charlie-Bob's Fan. W. B. Park. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981. (making a story for a wordless book)

Dracula's Cat. Jan Wahl. Prentice-Hall, 1978. (fantastic story)

Dreams. Ezra Jack Keats. Macmillan, 1974. (writing epilogue or sequel)

Easter Buds Are Springing. Lee Bennett Hopkins, ed. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979. (poetry and other kinds of writing about spring, holidays, etc.)

The Gift of the Sacred Dog. Paul Goble. Bradbury, 1980. (writing legends)

Hey-How for Halloween. Lee Bennett Hopkins, ed. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974. (writing Halloween stories and poems)

Hosie's Alphabet. Hosea Tobias and Lisa Baskin. Viking, 1972. (writing sophisticated alphabet with unusual vocabulary)

A Letter to Amy. Ezra Jack Keats. Harper & Row, 1968. (letter writing)

More Night. Muriel Rukeyser. Harper & Row, 1981. (writing about night and dreams)

The Napping House. Audrey Wood. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. (cumulative tale)

The Other Bone. Ed Young. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. (wordless book, good for retelling of story)

Picture Book Theater: The Mysterious Stranger and The Magic Spell. Beatrice Schenk de Regniers. Clarion, 1982. (writing plays)

The Scribble Monster. Jack Kent. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981. (scribble fun)

Shawn Goes to School. Petronella Breinburg. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973. (a school story for the very young child/writing one's own school story)

The Sky Is Full of Song. Lee Bennett Hopkins, ed. Harper & Row, 1983. (poems about the seasons)

Surprises. Lee Bennett Hopkins, ed. Harper & Row, 1984. (poetry for beginners)

Tico and the Golden Wings. Leo Lionni. Pantheon, 1964. (problem solving and fun with endings)

Two Monsters. Lucretia Fisher. Stemmer House, 1976. (monster fun)

Up a Tree. Ed Young. Harper & Row, 1983. (a wordless book that needs a story)

While the Moon Shines Bright. Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson. Harper & Row, 1981. (a bedtime chant)

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. Verna Aardema. Dial, 1975. (writing myths)

The Year of Mr. Nobody. Cynthia King. Harper & Row, 1978. (imaginary friends)

Zoophabets. Robert Tallon. Scholastic, 1979. (writing zany alphabets)

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After the Goat Man. Betsy Byars. Viking, 1974. (identification, problem solving, writing own stories)

Anastasia Krupnik. Lois Lowry. Bantam, 1981. (writing journals)

Behind the Attic Wall. Sylvia Cassedy. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983. (writing about make-believe friends)

Creatures from Lost Worlds. Seymour Simon. J. B. Lippincott, 1979. (creating wonderful monsters)

Dear Mr. Henshaw. Beverly Cleary. Morrow, 1983. (writing letters to authors)

Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams. Karla Kuskin. Harper & Row, 1980. (poetry)

The Emperor's New Clothes. H. C. Andersen. Retold by Anne Rockwell. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1982. (Although a picture book, its purpose here is for examining language used for persuasion or political purposes)

Flapdoodle. Alvin Schwartz. J. B. Lippincott, 1980. (the language of nonsense and folklore)

Gardine vs. Hanover. Joan L. Oppenheimer. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1982. (point of view)

Hanukkah Book. Marilyn Burns. Four Winds, 1981. (writing about holidays)

Harriet the Spy. Louise Fitzhugh. Harper & Row, 1964. (writing in journals)

I Heard a Scream in the Street. Nancy Larrick, ed. M. Evans & Co., 1970. (poetry by city children—to encourage children's own poetry writing)

Kickle Snifters and Other Fearsome Creatures. Alvin Schwartz. Bantam, 1976. (humorous writing)

The Last of Eden. Stephanie S. Tolan. Bantam, 1981. (keeping a journal)

Light Another Candle. Miriam Chaikin. Clarion, 1981. (writing about the meaning of holidays)

Miracles. Richard Lewis, comp. Simon & Schuster, 1966. (poems by children—to encourage other children to write)

Myths of Greece and Rome. Thomas Bulfinch. Penguin, 1981. (writing myths)

Nobody's Family Is Going to Change. Louise Fitzhugh. Dell, 1975. (identification/finding more about self through writing)

Omega Station. Alfred Slote. J. B. Lippincott, 1983. (writing science fiction)

Phantom Hand and Other American Hauntings. Walter Harter. Prentice-Hall, 1976. (ghost stories)

Piñatas and Paper Flowers: Holidays of the Americas in English and Spanish. Lila Perl and Alma Flor Ada. Clarion, 1983. (writing about different holidays)

Summer Switch. Mary Rodgers. Harper & Row, 1982. (point of view)

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing. Judy Blume. Dell, 1972. (first person narrative)

Vampire Express. Tony Koltz. Bantam, 1984. (a Choose Your Own Adventure Story—to encourage children's own adventure stories)

We Interrupt This Semester for an Important Bulletin. Ellen Conford. Little, Brown, 1979. (newspaper writing)

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